(c) whether it is also a fact that CBI inquiry is being conducted into the above irregularities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) : (a) No such instance has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) to (d) Questions do not arise.

Development of Ajanta-Ellora caves

2406. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Japan Bank of International Corporation (JBIC) has agreed to extend Rs. 350 crore loan for the second phase of Ajanta-Ellora conservation and tourism development project ;

(b) if so, the details of the project which will be taken in phase-II;

(c) by when, these works would start; and

(d) the details of projects which have since been completed for the development of Ajanta-Ellora caves under phase-I with the help of JBIC?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) : (a) to (c) The matter is under discussion with the authorities.

(d) The details of projects which have been completed under phase-I with the help of JBIC are as follows :—

(i) Monument conservation and improvement of approach path to caves.
(ii) Extension of airport runway and upgradation.
(iii) Afforestation of 736 hectares of forest land near the caves.
(iv) Upgradation of 162 kms of road in Ajanta-Ellora region.
(v) Raising height of Tondapore irrigation dam and installation of water supply system at caves.
(vi) Augmentation of water supply at caves and provision of related supply network.
(vii) Visitor Management System.

Incentives to tourists

2407. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in News Time dated the 3rd October, 2001 captioned "Hotel Industry goes for the hard sell"; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto and the steps taken/

proposed to be taken to provide incentives to the tourists in order to boost tourism which has suffered a set-back after the terrorist attacks in the United States in September this year ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Ministry of Tourism in consultation with the travel trade, hotels and airlines has discussed the strategy to counter the set back suffered by the tourism industry following the recent terrorist attacks in the United States in September this year. Efforts have been made to send appropriate signals all over the world that India is a safe destination and marketing is also being reoriented by focussing on less effected markets and requesting the trade and industry to tap the potential of domestic tourism. All concerned in the tourism industry *viz.* hotels, travel agents, airlines etc. have been requested to give special boost to domestic tourism by promoting new facilities and infrastructure.

Development of tourism in NE Region

2408. SHRI C. APOK JAMIR : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to explore the various possibilities for development of tourism places in NER;

(d) if so, the location-wise details thereof; and

(c) the necessary steps being taken by Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) : (a) Development of tourist places is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. However, Department of Tourism, Government of India provides Central financial assistance every year to the State Governments/UT Administrations for the projects identified in consultation with them which includes the projects at the places of tourist interest.

(b) During first three years of Ninth Plan, 280 projects amounting to Rs. 60.93 crores were sanctioned and an amount of Rs. 22.24 crores was released. A Statement showing the details is given (*See* below).

(c) The Department of Tourism, Government of India from time to time advise the State Governments/UT Administrations to complete the project expeditiously so as to improve the infrastructural facilities in respective States.